THREE RESTORATION AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ADAPTATIONS OF MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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It is the purpose of this thesis to examine and compare three Restoration and eighteenth century adaptations of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: William Davenant's The Law Against Lovers, acted in 1662; Charles Gildon's Measure for Measure: or, Beauty the Best Advocate, acted in 1700; and John Philip Kemble's Shakspeare's Measure for Measure, acted in 1794. The plays are discussed with regard to their divergence from Shakespeare's play. In addition, they are examined from the standpoint of their ability to reflect the theatrical practices, audience preferences, and social conditions of the time in which they were performed.

The paper is comprised of four chapters, the first being an introduction, which supplies vital background information about the theatrical and social conditions prevalent between 1660 and 1800. Chapter I also contains a synopsis of Measure for Measure. In each of the following chapters, one of the adaptations is discussed at length, Chapter II being devoted to Davenant, Chapter III to Gildon, and Chapter IV to Kemble.

The comparison of the adaptations with Shakespeare's original makes evident several things. First, it is clear that each of the three adaptors interpreted differently his role as an improver of Shakespeare. Davenant

obviously felt no qualms at rearranging incidents, adding or subtracting elements, and combining two Shakespearean plays, Measure for Measure and Much Ado About Nothing, without giving credit to Shakespeare. Gildon took many of the same liberties as Davenant did, but with a different purpose: he was satirizing the practice of wanton alteration of Shakespeare, not seriously conforming to that practice. His only serious concern with changing Shakespeare's works was to make them conform to the classical rules of drama. Kemble, who represents the opposite extreme from Davenant, effected only those changes which he felt were necessary to make feasible the play's presentation on the late eighteenth century stage.

Second, it is apparent that each of the three adaptors--Davenant, Gildon, and Kemble--was greatly influenced by audience preferences and current theatrical trends. Davenant inserted operatic elements, reformed the language and made the plot more moralistic, and combined two plays in order to utilize what he considered to be the best from each, all in order to appease his audiences' demands for such things. Similarly, Gildon refined Measure for Measure to make it conform to the tenets set forth by Collier, but with a different twist. Gildon was not serious in his attempt to please the audience and conform to the social and moral standards of the time, while Davenant was. Kemble, as a result of the earlier Shakespearean revival and the audience demands for presentations of Shakespeare's plays in their original

form, produced an adaptation of Measure for Measure almost identical to the original.

Finally, one can see that in almost every case the adaptor's attempt to improve Shakespeare's plot, his language, his morals, or his characters resulted in more ambiguity and a less perfect play than the original. Davenant tried to improve on Shakespeare's plot by adding the Beatrice-Benedick episodes from Much Ado About Nothing, but the result was a more complicated, less coherent plot. Gildon purposely butchered Measure for Measure in every aspect to show the fatal results of such actions by serious adaptors. And Kemble, while changing very little in the play, changed the interpretation of Lucio by consciously omitting from his speeches any lines which showed him to be a sympathetic character.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this paper to examine and compare three Restoration and eighteenth century adaptations of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure:[1] The Law Against Lovers,[2] by Sir William Davenant; Measure for Measure: or, Beauty the Best Advocate,[3] by Charles Gildon; and Shakspeare's Measure for Measure,[4] by John Philip Kemble. These plays will be discussed with regard to their divergence from Shakespeare's play; but more important, they will be examined from the standpoint of their ability to reflect the theatrical practices, audience preferences, and social conditions of the time in which they were performed. Before such a study can be undertaken, however, it is necessary to provide a background of the theatrical conditions which influenced these and other plays written and performed between 1660 and 1800.

When Charles II regained the throne in 1660, he granted patents for the establishment of two theatre companies. The recipients of these patents, Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant, began immediately to arrange for the production of plays, Killigrew establishing his King's Company at the Verre Street Theatre,[5] and Davenant establishing his Duke's Company briefly at Salisbury Court[6] and then at Lisle's Tennis

Court, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.[7] The virtual closing of the theatres during the years of the Commonwealth had created a gap in stage traditions which resulted in several distinct changes in theatrical practice. But the fact that the theatres were closed during the Commonwealth period does not mean that acting and dramatic writing ceased between the death of Charles I and the restoration of Charles II to the throne. Davenant, for example, who was actively engaged in the theatrical business before Cromwell seized power, did not sit idle during that period. He spent his time learning more about French stage techniques and perfecting his ideas for movable stage scenery and machines. More important, he staged several masques and operas, privately at first, and then more openly toward the end of Cromwell's government.[8]

Van Lennep notes five major early Restoration innovations which affected the stage from 1660 to 1800 and beyond: the monopoly of the theatre by two companies, or sometimes by one combined company, protected by patents; the introduction of women to act female roles; new playhouse designs which provided, among other changes, seating in the pit area; the extended use of scenery and stage machines to produce spectacles and enhance plays and operas; and the introduction of entr'acte songs, dances, or operatic interludes to further divert and entertain the audience.[9] Each of these innovations--with the possible exception of the new playhouse designs--directly influenced Davenant's adaptation of Measure for Measure and through it the other two

adaptations here discussed as well.

The theatrical monopoly enjoyed by Killigrew and Davenant also included sole rights to various of Shakespeare's plays. According to Spencer, Davenant petitioned for and won the rights to nine Shakespeare plays, among them Much Ado About Nothing and Measure for Measure. Similarly, eight years later Davenant obtained rights to five other Shakespearean plays. The King's Company in turn received rights to twenty-one of Shakespeare's plays.[10] Spencer also notes that although the King's Company held the rights to more of Shakespeare's plays, the Duke's Company under Davenant was responsible for the majority of the adaptations presented during the Restoration period, one of which was The Law Against Lovers.[11]

The advent of women on the stage in 1660 rendered female roles much more believable. Accordingly, bawdy women's parts were toned down or cut altogether in order both to uplift the moral standards of the theatre and to protect women from the necessity of acting lewd parts.[12] In addition, plays with strong women's roles were revived and adapted to best exhibit the talents of the actresses. The part of Isabella in Measure for Measure and its adapted versions is a forceful one and could have been played to full advantage only by a woman; thus it was a natural choice for revival and adaptation by Davenant.

The long closing of the theatres had an effect on the physical structure of the theatres themselves. The Elizabethan platform stage was

removed[13] and replaced by a stage which "extended in front of the proscenium arch into the pit."[14] The pit was equipped with seats or benches which allowed the general public to sit rather than stand as they had done previously. In addition to seating in the pit, there were boxes for the more privileged and galleries above those.[15] Additional seating or standing on the stage was alternately allowed and forbidden during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and was not abolished totally until Garrick finally stopped the practice in 1763.[16]

As noted earlier, Davenant spent much time and effort during the years of the Commonwealth learning about and perfecting his theories and designs for movable stage scenery. When he opened his theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, he was able to implement his ideas, thus becoming the first to introduce stage scenery and machines to England. As well as painted scenes and backdrops which were changed periodically during a performance, Davenant devised a means of making people and objects rise or descend, a trick calculated to please and astound the spectators.[17]

Davenant's interest in music and dancing as diversions to enhance or heighten the audience's enjoyment of dramatic performances was evident in his pre-Restoration productions, notably The Siege of Rhodes, which "was the first English opera."[18] Among his other operas were The Cruelty of the Spaniards, more musical and less dramatic than Rhodes, and The History of Sir Francis Drake.[19] Davenant used

considerable strategy in obtaining permission to produce dramatic offerings during Cromwell's protectorship. He got them accepted for public performance by calling them "moral representations" and by making the first productions, most notable of which was The Cruelty of the Spaniards, predominantly music and pageantry.[20] By the time he publicly presented Sir Francis Drake, he was able to slip in an amount of acting as well, "consciously [going] one step further toward the legitimate drama."[21] Thus, when Davenant received his patent and opened his theatre in 1660, it was only natural that he should retain some of the operatic devices he had so successfully employed before the Restoration. The operatic insertions often took the form of entr'acte entertainments, and were well received by the audiences, as Pepys attests to in his Diary entry for February 18, 1662, where he says of The Law Against Lovers that it was "a good play and well performed, especially the little girl's (whom I never saw act before) dancing and singing." This play, actually a combination of Measure for Measure and the Beatrice-Benedick romance from Much Ado About Nothing, was a direct outgrowth of Davenant's interest in entr'acte dance and song. In addition, it reflected, in the Beatrice-Benedick scenes, the Restoration audience's love of raillery and witty conversation.

By the time Gildon's adaptation of Measure for Measure was produced in early 1700, all of these innovations had become standard theatrical practice. Between the production of Davenant's Law Against

Lovers and that of Gildon's Beauty the Best Advocate, however, there were two major changes in the theatre companies. In 1682, the King's Company, beset by many problems, was absorbed into the stronger and more powerful Duke's Company. This United Company lasted until 1695, withstanding several shifts in management during its existence. The Davenant family managed the company for some time; but, due to the dishonesty and mismanagement of Alexander Davenant, Christopher Rich gained control of the company in late 1693 and contributed greatly to the discontent among the actors which led to the formation of a new company two years later. In 1695, after enduring the unsympathetic, mercenary management of Rich and Sir Thomas Skipwith his associate, Betterton, Anne Bracegirdle, and Elizabeth Barry applied for and received a patent to form a second acting company. They established themselves in the old Lisle's Tennis Court, Lincoln's-Inn-Field, which had housed the Duke's Company in the early days of the Restoration.[22]

Another important incident took place before the production of Gildon's adaptation: the publication of Jeremy Collier's A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, in 1698. Collier attacked what he considered to be the vulgarities of plays on stage in the 1690's, including such plays as Shakespeare's Hamlet, about which he deplored the sullying "of [Ophelia's] reputation" during her mad scene.[23] Collier's attack was actually the culmination of various attempts to uplift all phases of English life, and it had a lasting effect

on the theatre. Playwrights were forced to turn out sentimental comedies rather than the bitingly satirical plays popular up to that time. As a result, some of them revolted and attempted to answer Collier in scathing articles, prologues, epilogues, and plays. It is my contention that Gildon's Beauty the Best Advocate is actually a satire pointing out the consequences of sentimentalizing and refining Shakespeare's plays in order to make them more moral.

Between the production of Beauty the Best Advocate and Kemble's version of Measure for Measure in 1794, almost one hundred years elapsed. Of course there were many changes in the theatre during this time, but for the most part they were gradual. During the early years of the eighteenth century there were three distinct alterations in the London theatrical offerings: the trend toward a more diversified repertory with an abundance of new plays mixed in; the broadening of the evening's entertainments to include afterpieces as well as the entr'acte entertainments which had become popular before 1700; and the introduction and subsequent popularity of Italian and ballad opera.[24] From 1729 to 1737 theatrical activity in London increased greatly. New companies were formed,and they more readily accepted and produced new plays than did the established patent theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. As a result, drama experienced a vital stimulus which had been lacking in the early years of the century. Whereas before 1729 the two existing theatres had had difficulty attracting audiences, between 1729 and 1737

there were regularly four and sometimes five and six different plays being performed, all to large audiences. But with the Licensing Act of 1737 much of this activity was curtailed. The two patent companies, eager to regain their monopoly, supported the Act and aided in restricting and finally in subduing the more experimental theatres.[25]

Although the Licensing Act did not succeed until 1752 in banishing all but the two patent theatres, it was successful in restricting and censoring many new plays, especially comedies thought to be in any way political. The audiences aided the Lord Chamberlain and Prime Minister Walpole in curbing new plays by forcing theatre managers to find more acceptable plays. Their most obvious choice was to begin reviving Shakespeare's plays, and by the end of the 1740-1741 season only six of his plays had not reappeared on the boards.[26] Measure for Measure, however, had been acted over forty-five times between 1720 and 1743. Whether the text used in these productions was Shakespeare's or an adaptation--Davenant's, Gildon's, or some other author's--is not known, but the playbills advertised it as Shakespeare's.[27]

One of the most significant and lasting changes in the theatre in the eighteenth century occurred in the midst of the Shakespeare revival. Macklin sparked the natural school of acting when he played Shylock on February 14, 1741, advertising "the Jew that Shakespeare drew." Garrick picked up on the style, and natural acting had soon displaced the old declamatory style popular since Restoration times.[28]

Yet another change occurred during the 1700's, this time in the latter half of the century: a third patent theatre was established in London. Samuel Foote received this third patent in 1766 as a result of the Duke of York's persuasive ability with the King, and he established his company at the Haymarket. Thus after 1766 there existed three patent theatres in London instead of only two.[29]

Unlike the first two adaptors being considered, Kemble made no major changes in Measure for Measure. In fact, he took all previous reworkings of the play, as well as the original, into consideration. The final result was what he believed to be the best possible version for stage production.[30] The fact that Kemble's version is very close to the original and the fact that he retained little from Davenant and Gildon indicate that audience taste had changed drastically since the Restoration. Audiences were no longer entertained by the wit of the early Restoration plays, nor by the sentimentality of the early eighteenth century. They had seen Shakespeare's plays in their original form--or as near to the original form as possible--and they would settle no longer for inferior adaptations. Consequently, Kemble's Measure for Measure is the direct result of the shift in audience taste toward original Shakespearean plays and away from adaptations.

As previously stated, it is the purpose of this study to discuss Davenant's, Gildon's, and Kemble's adaptations of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure with regard to how they reflect the taste and temper of the

time in which they were performed, as well as their relationship with the original comedy. To do this one must determine what an adaptation comprises. Christopher Spencer defines "the typical adaptation" as including "substantial cuts of scenes, speeches, and speech assignments; much alteration of language; and at least one and usually several important (or scene-length) additions. Accompanying these measurable changes are alterations or at least new emphases in tone, in character, and in theme."[31] Both the Davenant and the Gildon adaptations are of this type. In addition Spencer notes another less typical sort of adaptation "in which the text is cut, speech assignments are shifted, and the language is somewhat altered, but in which there are no major additions."[32] Kemble's version of Measure for Measure falls into this category. Branam divides eighteenth-century adaptations of Shakespeare into three groups: early, middle, and late. Gildon's alteration falls into the early group, about which Branam says: "these altered versions were so extensively changed as to be new plays based on Shakespearean material and incorporating passages, more or less intact, from the original play."[33] The alterations of the late period are mainly those of Kemble, whose major concern with changing a Shakespearean play from its original form was to make it better suited for stage production, not to make it conform to the language and tastes of the time as Davenant did seriously and as Gildon did satirically.

In adapting Shakespeare, Restoration and eighteenth-century dramatists were attempting both to refine what they considered to be his crudities and to add "the sense of harmony and pattern and consistency and order that they felt art should offer."[34] Therefore, they did not see their adaptations as mutilations of the original, but as more perfect works of art which retained the best of Shakespeare but eliminated or perfected the worst. It is important to note that the audiences who saw these adaptations were much more sensitive to what they considered to be vulgarities than were the Elizabethans, or so it seems from inspecting the adaptations. In each of the three being studied here, the adaptors found it necessary to euphemize the propriety of a particular situation which in Shakespeare hinted at impropriety. As a result, "characters . . . tended to become generalized as the adaptor fit them into his mould, where they served the stronger interests of moral clarity, of easily understandable motivation, of sharpened comparison and contrast, or simply of balance and unity."[35] Thus in Gildon's adaptation, for example, Angelo is made totally black and corrupt, without the few redeeming qualities allowed him by Shakespeare, in order to sharpen the contrast between his hypocrisy and wickedness and the goodness and purity of Isabella.

In order to discuss the changes effected by Davenant, Gildon, and Kemble on Shakespeare's play, it is advisable to provide a synopsis of

Measure for Measure as a basis for a comparison of the adaptations with the original.

Act I

In the first scene the Duke of Vienna announces his departure from that city because he wants old laws which have been on the books but have not been enforced to be so now. Since he fears the reaction of the citizens if he were to enforce such laws, he entrusts his authority to Angelo, who will enforce them for him. There follows in Scene 2 an interlude in which it is revealed that the law against prostitution is being enforced and that the full penalty--death--will be exacted of Claudio "for getting Madam Julietta with child." In addition, a bawd and her pimp are being carted to prison and their house of ill repute closed as a result of the law. Claudio is led by in chains and he implores his friend Lucio to find his sister Isabella, a novice in a convent, and beg her to plead with Angelo for his life. Claudio argues that he is not guilty, since he and Julietta are contracted to each other and thus are just as good as married. Only one problem stands in the way of his acquittal; there were no witnesses to the contract, which makes it invalid before the law. Scene 3 discovers the Duke's true purpose in leaving Vienna: he will return disguised as a monk in order to observe Angelo's handling of the city. In Scene 4 Lucio persuades Isabella to intercede for Claudio.

Act II

Scene 1 opens with Escalus attempting to persuade Angelo not to execute Claudio. Angelo will not relent and sends out the order that he be executed by nine the following morning. There follows a somewhat comic interlude with Froth, Elbow, and Pompey. In Scene 2 Isabella goes to Angelo and begs him to be merciful to Claudio. At first he refuses, but finally, disturbed by her virtue and beauty, he agrees to think the matter over and asks her to return the next morning. Scene 3 finds the disguised Duke questioning Julietta. Scene 4 is set in Angelo's house, where Isabella has returned as Angelo had requested. She again pleads for her brother's life, but Angelo informs her that she can save Claudio only by consenting to become Angelo's mistress. Isabella indignantly refuses, since she values her virtue over her brother's life, as she believes he will also.

Act III

Going directly from Angelo's to the prison, Isabella acquaints her brother with Angelo's foul proposition. She is shocked to find, however, that Claudio desires her to do anything to save him. So she denounces her brother and would depart the prison except that the disguised Duke intercepts her and proposes that she agree to meet Angelo. At this meeting Mariana, Angelo's betrothed, whom he abandoned years before, would take Isabella's place, fooling Angelo into thinking it is

Isabella and thus saving Claudio from death. Scene 2 is comic, with an encounter between the disguised Duke and Lucio, who slanders the Duke to the supposed friar. The comic tone of the scene is further heightened by the appearance of Mistress Overdone, the bawd.

Act IV

Scene 1 opens with a song lamenting Mariana's lost love. The Duke and Isabella enter and acquaint Mariana with the planned switch, to which she readily agrees. Scene 2 takes place in the prison, where comic dialogue passes between the Provost, Abhorson and Pompey. The Duke enters and asks if the pardon has yet come from Angelo. It has not, and they wait until a messenger brings an order to the Provost. But the order only confirms the execution order; it does not grant Claudio a pardon. Furthermore, Angelo desires Claudio's head by five the next morning. The Duke then convinces the Provost to execute only the condemned murderer Barnardine and to present his head in place of Claudio's. Scene 3 finds Barnardine spiritually unprepared to die, but fortunately another prisoner, who looks much like Claudio, has died during the night, and they send his head to Angelo. Isabella enters and, instead of telling her of his plan to save Claudio, the Duke tells her that her brother has been executed at Angelo's order. The following three scenes find everyone in preparation for the Duke's return.

Act V

The Duke returns and Isabella presents her case against Angelo, who denies her accusations. Then friar Peter speaks up and accuses Isabella of lying about Angelo's having violated her virginity. He produces Mariana, who says it was she who slept with Angelo. Angelo continues to deny his guilt until the Duke returns in his friar's habit and reveals his true identity. Angelo then admits his guilt,and the Duke commands that he wed Mariana at once and be executed immediately afterward. But Mariana persuades Isabella to intercede for him in her behalf and the Duke rescinds the sentence. Then Claudio is brought in and reunited with his sister and Julietta. Finally, for the slanderous things Lucio said about the Duke, he is ordered to marry a whore. The play ends with the Duke hinting that he himself wants to marry Isabella.

NOTES

[1] William Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, in The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. Irving Ribner and George Lyman Kittredge (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn and Company, 1971), pp. 473-507. Hereafter cited in documentation as Measure.

[2] William Davenant, The Law Against Lovers, in The Works of Sir William Davenant (1673; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), pp. 277-329. Hereafter cited in documentation as Law.

[3] Charles Gildon, Measure for Measure: or, Beauty the Best Advocate (1700; rpt. London: Cornmarket Press, 1969). Hereafter cited in documentation as Beauty.

[4] John Philip Kemble, Shakspeare's Measure for Measure (London: C. Lowndes, 1803). Hereafter cited in documentation as Kemble.

[5] William Van Lennep, The London Stage, 1660-1700 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1963), I, xxxv.

[6] Ibid., p. xxxiii.

[7] Ibid., p. xxxv.

[8] Leslie Hotson, The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1928), pp. 139-149.

[9] Van Lennep, p. xxii.

[10] Christopher Spencer, ed., Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1965) p. 1.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Van Lennep, p. xxv.

[13] Hazelton Spencer, Shakespeare Improved (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1927), p. 3.

[14] Van Lennep, p. xxiv.

[15] Ibid., pp. xxiv-xxv.

[16] George H. Nettleton, Arthur E. Case, George Winchester Stone, Jr., ed., British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan, 2nd. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 707.

[17] Van Lennep, pp. lxxiv-lxxvi.

[18] Hotson, p. 151.

[19] Ibid., pp. 157-159.

[20] Ibid., p. 152.

[21] Ibid., p. 159.

[22] Van Lennep, p. xlii.

[23] Nettleton, p. 391.

[24] Emmett L. Avery, The London Stage, 1700-1729 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1960), I, xxvii-xxviii.

[25] Arthur A. Scouten, The London Stage, 1729-1747 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1961), I, cxxxviii-clix.

[26] Ibid., pp. cl-cli.

[27] Avery, II, pp. 603, 606, et passim; Scouten, I, pp. 18, 31, et passim; Scouten, II, pp. 646, 660, et passim.

[28] Scouten, p. cli.

[29] C. B. Hogan, The London Stage, 1776-1800 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1963), I, cxxix.

[30] George C. Branam, Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy (Berkley: Univ. of California Press, 1956), pp. 16-17.

[31] Christopher Spencer, p. 7.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Branam, pp. 7-8.

[34] Christopher Spencer, p. 11.

[35] Ibid., p. 12.

CHAPTER II

DAVENANT'S THE LAW AGAINST LOVERS

Sir William Davenant's The Law Against Lovers, performed in February, 1662, is not merely an adaptation of Measure for Measure, as are the other plays here considered. Davenant, desirous of producing a play with both a moralistic plot and a witty pair of lovers, combined Shakespeare's Measure for Measure with Much Ado About Nothing, drawing the plot from the former and the witty lovers from the latter. But, as Nethercot notes, "When The Law Against Lovers was first printed in the folio, the text contained no hint for the injudicious reader as to what had happened."[1] Davenant took what he wanted from each play, leaning heavily on Shakespeare's plot and to some extent on his characterizations, and altering both mercilessly as his whim dictated, but he gave no credit to Shakespeare for his borrowings. As with each of the three adaptations of Measure for Measure presented between 1662 and 1800, there are bad and good aspects to Davenant's alteration, both of which will be here considered, first from the standpoint of plot and then from that of characterization.

Davenant included neither a prologue nor an epilogue in his printed version of Law Against Lovers, but it is probable that they were

delivered as a part of the stage production. Although Davenant followed Shakespeare's basic plot to some degree, he did see fit to change the setting of the play from Vienna to Turin. His reason for doing so is not evident; there is no mention of that city in either Measure for Measure or Much Ado About Nothing. The many plot changes made by Davenant will become evident in the following summary of the action of The Law Against Lovers.

Act I

The first scene parallels Shakespeare's, but the language used by Davenant is totally foreign to the original version. The Duke professes to be leaving Turin to travel about--disguised--in other countries so that he can more easily observe their laws and customs. From the conversation between Angelo and the Duke, we learn that Angelo's brother, Benedick, is about to return victorious from some battle.

After the Duke takes his leave of Angelo and Escalus, they exit and Beatrice, Julietta, Viola, and Balthazar enter. The ladies demand of Balthazar when Benedick is expected to return, and when Beatrice learns that he is expected presently, she quizzes Balthazar about the number of men Benedick has killed. Here Davenant borrows Shakespeare's words from Act I, Scene 1, of Much Ado About Nothing, lines 35 through 37. The close resemblance between the two scenes continues with Davenant, apparently for want of wit on his own part, lifting entire

speeches exactly as they were written--a thing he rarely does with the scenes and speeches adapted from Measure for Measure. Next Benedick arrives,and the ladies hide behind the curtains so that they can listen to him boast of his victories. There follows some original dialogue by Davenant in which Benedick learns of the Duke's departure and of Angelo's new position. When the ladies re-enter, there is more witty dialogue--straight from Shakespeare--between Beatrice and Benedick.

Presently Claudio enters, led to jail by the Provost. Davenant has used essentially Shakespeare's words for Claudio, but he has shortened them considerably and in the process taken out some of the bitterness inherent in those speeches. For example, Shakespeare has Claudio say:

CLAUD. Thus can the demigod, Authority,
Make us pay down for our offence by weight
The words of heaven, on whom it will, it will;
On whom it will not, so: yet still 'tis just.

LUCIO. Why, how now, Claudio? Whence comes this restraint?

CLAUD. From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty.
As surfeit is the father of much fast,
So every scope by the immoderate use
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.
(Measure I. iii. 107-119.)

But Davenant shortens this to:

CLAUD. Thus can the Demi-god Authority make
Us pay down for our offence by weight.

LUCIO. Claudio! how now! from whence comes this restraint?

CLAUD. From too much liberty.
As Surfeit is the father of a Fast,
So Liberty by the immoderate use,
Turns to restraint. Our Nature does pursue
An evil Thirst, and when we drink, we dye.
(Law I.i.p.277.)

As well as shortening them, Davenant also finds it necessary to refine some of Shakespeare's speeches. When, in Measure for Measure, Lucio questions Claudio about his crime, he uses the word "lechery." But Davenant changes this one word to the phrase: "I believe 'tis what the precise call Incontinence." In Gildon's adaptation this would be a satirical remark ridiculing the false modesty of his contemporaries, but in Davenant's it can only be interpreted as a serious attempt to upgrade the language of Shakespeare.

As in Measure for Measure, Claudio desires Lucio to enlist Isabella's help in convincing Angelo to commute the sentence. Lucio agrees to do so, and Act I closes with Isabella preparing to meet with Angelo.

Act II

Act II begins with a conversation between Angelo and Benedick. Benedick's lines are taken in part from those of Escalus in Act II, Scene 1, of Measure for Measure. As in most of the play, Davenant uses Shakespeare's words as a starting point for his own, changing the wording and the meaning to fit his own purpose; but just what that purpose is is not always evident. There follows a dialogue between

Escalus and Benedick about finding a wife for Benedick. Angelo, Escalus tells him, desires his brother to find a wife and settle down. Benedick protests that he loves no one, and Escalus recommends the beauty of Beatrice, whom Benedick declares has too much wit to make a good wife. Beatrice and Viola then enter, and there follows more raillery between Benedick and Beatrice. However, they are agreed on one point: Claudio should be pardoned.

After they exit, Angelo enters and, as in Shakespeare, the Provost gives him a chance to change the execution order. But Angelo stands firm; Claudio must die. When asked what to do with Julietta, he orders her confined and kept from seeing Claudio. Next Isabella arrives to sue for her brother's life, and the lines are similar to those of Shakespeare in Act II, Scene 2, of Measure for Measure. In this scene appears one of Isabella's more famous speeches, and the two versions can be compared as an example of Davenant's alteration of Shakespeare's language and meaning:

> Could great men thunder
> As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
> For every pelting petty officer
> Would use his heaven for thunder--nothing but thunder!
> Merciful heaven,
> Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt
> Splits't the unwedgeable and gnarled oak
> Than the soft myrtle. But man, proud man,
> Drest in a little brief authority,
> Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd
> (His glassy essence), like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven

As makes the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.
(Measure II. ii. 110-123.)

If men could thunder
As great Jove does, Jove ne'er would quiet be;
For every colerik petty Officer,
Would use his Magazeen in Heaven for Thunder;
We nothing should but Thunder hear. Sweet Heaven!
Thou rather with thy stiff and Sulph'rous Bolt,
Dost split the knotty and obdurate Oak,
Than the soft Mirtle. O but man; proud man,
(Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he thinks himself
Assur'd) does in his glassy essence, like
An angry Ape, play such fantastick tricks
Before high Heaven, as would make Angels laugh
If they were mortal, and had spleens like us.
(Law II. ii. p. 287.)

Not only has Davenant changed Shakespeare's words, but he seems to have missed the meaning of the passage almost entirely. In Shakespeare's passage, man's "glassy essence" is that thing of which man is "most ignorant," yet "most assured." But in Davenant's, because of the rearranged elements of that sentence, it is not clear of what man is "most ignorant" yet "most assured." Nor is it made clear how a man's "essence"--a term which in the original play implies soul or spirit--can play "tricks/Before high Heaven." In addition, by moving Shakespeare's parentheses from "(His glassy essence)" to "(Drest in a little brief authority,/Most ignorant of what he thinks himself/Assur'd)," Davenant relegates to a secondary position one of Shakespeare's more effective metaphors.

Davenant has retained Lucio in Scene 2 to perform the same function as he did in Measure for Measure: Lucio encourages Isabella to speak her mind and spurs her on to more convincing arguments. But, as in Shakespeare, Isabella cannot move Angelo to change his mind. Davenant closes the scene, as does Shakespeare, with Angelo's soliloquy showing that he is tempted by Isabella's beauty and virtue. But what was a twenty-six line speech in which Angelo made up his mind, wavered, and then seemed to give in to Isabella's virtue, becomes, in The Law Against Lovers, a six line speech indicating that Isabella's innocent beauty has won him where a more worldly charm could not have.

> I love her virtue. But, temptation! O!
> Thou false and cunning guide! who in disguise
> Of Virtues shape lead'st us through Heaven to Hell.
> No vitious Beauty could with practis'd Art
> Subdue, like Virgin-innocence, my heart.
> (Law II. ii. p. 287.)

The next scene, set in the prison and consisting of a conversation among the Duke, the Provost, and Julietta, is taken directly--with a few minor changes--from Act II, Scene 3, of Measure for Measure. Davenant then interpolates a scene of his own creation in which Lucio and Balthazar visit Claudio and attempt to reassure him that there is still hope for his pardon. Claudio has lost all hope, however, and entrusts Julietta to Balthazar's care. Lucio and Balthazar leave the stage, plotting a means, not to help Claudio, but to get Beatrice and Benedick together.

Act III

Scene 1, set in Angelo's palace, parallels Scene 4 of Shakespeare's second act. There follows another Beatrice-Benedick scene in which the two unite to form a plan to release Claudio by stealing Angelo's signet and forging his seal on a pardon. However, they cannot agree as to who will actually use the signet, so they leave the matter unsettled. After Benedick leaves, Viola sings a song by an anonymous composer, supposedly Benedick, and Lucio and Balthazar convince Beatrice that Benedick is in love with her.

The next scene, Isabella's visit to Claudio and her relation of Angelo's base proposal, follows Shakespeare's Act III, Scene 1, with one great exception. In Shakespeare's version Claudio asks Isabella to give up her virtue for his life,and he never changes this request. In Davenant's, Claudio realizes the error of his ways--after all, what is a brother's life when compared to a sister's virtue--and implores Isabella to take care of Julietta. In addition, he gives her a ring to deliver to Julietta as a symbol of their fatal love. As expected, the Duke overhears their conversation, but instead of proposing the switch between her and Mariana, he merely says that she will be able to obtain justice from the Duke at the proper time.

In the scene that follows, Benedick has secured forged pardons for Julietta and Claudio, and he informs Beatrice that it was Escalus who obtained the signet and forged the documents. Although both profess a

need to hurry to the jail, Beatrice engages Benedick in another witty parry about his alleged love song. When the scene changes to the prison, Viola is telling Julietta that she has good news, but cannot yet disclose it. She then proposes to stay the night in prison with her cousin, and they both retire.

Act IV

In the first scene of Act IV, Benedick confronts Lucio and upbraids him for wooing Beatrice as his proxy and behind his back. Then Beatrice enters, and they devise a plan to divert Angelo's attention so that he will not suspect the plot to free the lovers. They begin to dance and sing and make as much noise as possible in order to disturb and antagonize Angelo.

Scene 2 is set in the prison, where Lucio has gone to find out why the disguised Duke is obstructing the pardon. Davenant here decides to interject the fool--Pompey of Shakespeare's version--with whom Lucio jests while waiting for the Duke. The conversation between the Duke and Lucio is similar to their conversations in Measure for Measure: Lucio slanders the Duke to his face, all the while thinking him merely to be a meddling friar.

Next Isabella arrives to talk with Julietta. She scolds her brother's lover for giving in to passion, and she moralizes in rhymed couplets, while Julietta begs her--also in rhymed couplets--to give in to Angelo's

lust for the sake of saving Claudio's life. To prove her belief that it is better for Claudio to die than for her to give up her virginity to save him, Isabella suggests that Julietta take her place with Angelo so that she, rather than Isabella, can sacrifice her honor to save her lover. But Julietta is shocked at the prospect; she would rather let Claudio die than betray his love by giving her body--even in disguise--to another man. Thus, Isabella has made her point: neither sister nor lover will trade her honor for Claudio's life.

Next is another witty scene between Beatrice and Benedick, which is followed by one similar to Shakespeare's Act IV, Scene 3, the attempted preparation of Barnardine for his execution. In keeping with his talent for complicating the plot, Davenant then has Claudio bribe the fool to aid Julietta to escape from prison, while she simultaneously convinces the Provost's wife to help Claudio to escape. There is but one catch to their plans: only one of them will be free; the other will have to die. Consequently neither will accept the other's escape plan, and they both remain in prison to await their fates. After this, Isabella goes once more to visit Angelo, and he again demands her body in exchange for her brother's life. When she continues to refuse, he surprises both her and the audience by telling her that he had only been testing her virtue to see if she would make a good wife and that he had never really planned to kill Claudio at all. But Isabella rejects his offer of marriage because she does not really believe him.

Act V

Act V finds Benedick, Beatrice, and friends executing their plan to disturb Angelo and divert his attention from their conspiracy to free the lovers. In the next scene, Angelo learns that Benedick is leading a band of rebels to the prison to release Claudio and Julietta. He quickly orders out the guards, and a fierce battle ensues, with neither side willing to give in. Balthazar relates most of the off-stage action to Beatrice and tells her that just when Benedick was about to gain the prison, the Duke threw off his disguise, took command, and removed both Angelo and Benedick to prison. Friar Thomas visits Angelo in his cell and tells him that, in the confusion of the siege, Claudio was executed as ordered. Angelo is stunned that the messenger he had sent with his pardon arrived too late. The friar also informs Angelo that just before Claudio's death another friar (the disguised Duke) had married him to Julietta, and since Claudio died under sentence of law, all of his and Julietta's earthly possessions revert to the Duke. Therefore, to atone for his guilt, Angelo offers to give all of his worldly possessions to Julietta. But Escalus enters and says that the Duke has awarded Angelo's wealth to Isabella. Next comes Isabella to visit Angelo, and she informs him that she does not want his money and that Claudio is still alive. As Angelo ponders the wonder of her revelation, Claudio and Julietta enter and after them come Beatrice, Benedick, and Viola. Beatrice hands Benedick a piece of paper and he fears that

it is a marriage contract. She answers: "No Sir, Plays that end so, begin to be out of fashion." But she will consent to marry him by the end of the play, for the Duke, pardoning everyone, unites Angelo and Isabella and Benedick and Beatrice, and announces his intention to abdicate his position and join a monastery. The play closes with the Duke's words:

> The Story of this day,
> When 'tis to future Ages told, will seem
> A moral drawn from a poetick Dream.

One fact becomes increasingly evident when reading The Law Against Lovers: Davenant's combination of Measure for Measure and Much Ado About Nothing has resulted in a play with too many sub-plots and too little coherence. One finds it difficult to keep all of the plots separated on the one hand, and to determine their inter-relationship on the other. As one author aptly put it, Davenant has "overreached himself in his ingenuity."[2] Davenant's method of tying the two plays together by making Angelo and Benedick brothers and Beatrice and Julietta cousins is not sufficient in itself to bring the various sub-plots together, and Davenant makes little other effort to obtain a cohesive plot.

As has been noted in the plot summary, Davenant strikes out on his own at several points in the play and creates new scenes and twists in the plot. Instead of making Angelo the supreme villain of the play, he has him only pretend to be so in order to test Isabella's virtue. He

omits Mariana entirely, changing the "bed-trick"--the exchange of Mariana for Isabella at the crucial moment--in Shakespeare's play for Isabella's suggestion of such a switch between herself and Julietta. He has Angelo actually send Claudio's pardon, whereas Shakespeare's Angelo only pretended to do so. He manufactures a rebellion led by Benedick in the cause of wronged lovers. And finally, he has the Duke deceive only Angelo about Claudio's death, whereas in Measure for Measure the Duke led all of the main characters to believe Claudio executed and beheaded.

Davenant does retain from the original play several features later to be omitted by Gildon, however. Lucio remains in his former role as antagonizer of the Duke and as general loud-mouth, and his part is even expanded to include him in the Beatrice-Benedick scenes. In addition, Davenant keeps Shakespeare's fool as well as Abhorson, the executioner, in much the same roles as in the original play. Aside from these somewhat minor elements, he also retains one of the key elements of the plot which Gildon changed: as in Shakespeare, Davenant's Claudio and Julietta are only secretly contracted to each other, not married. Davenant also transfers many of Shakespeare's speeches intact, especially the conversations between Beatrice and Benedick. But more often he changes and refines Shakespeare's words in order better to suit them to the speech of the early Restoration (as in Isabella's speech compared on pages 23-24 of this chapter).

Davenant's previous experience with opera is evident in The Law Against Lovers. He takes every available opportunity to introduce songs and dances into the plot, although he does not go as far as Gildon does by dividing the acts with operatic interludes unrelated to the plot line. In fact, Davenant manufactures Viola, a character foreign to either Measure for Measure or Much Ado About Nothing, solely to exploit her talents for song and dance. Nethercot suggests that Davenant's use of rhymed couplets in several of the moral passages "was the result of his desire to remind his patrons that they were still at the Opera."[3]

The reasons behind Davenant's plot changes and his combination of the two Shakespeare plays are often not immediately apparent. One must consider the stage conditions and audience of the early Restoration in order to understand more fully Davenant's motivations for writing The Law Against Lovers. First, as was discussed in Chapter I, women had only just been introduced on the stage the previous year, and Davenant was aware of the need for roles which would play up the talents of his actresses. By combining Measure for Measure and Much Ado About Nothing, he was able to use both one of Shakespeare's most virtuous ladies, Isabella, and one of his most intelligent and witty, Beatrice. The Beatrice-Benedick scenes precede by several years the similar pairs of witty lovers of the comedy of manners, but the fact that Davenant, who was always conscious of audience

preferences, chose to include them in his play indicates that Restoration audiences were already leaning toward such heroes and heroines. Audiences were composed more and more of middle and upper class women who desired to see themselves portrayed not as the simpering heroines of the heroic drama and of many of the tragedies of the time, but rather as intelligent beings equal to their men in the art of witty conversation, if not in other endeavors. They found such a heroine in Beatrice and to a lesser degree in Isabella, who, while a paragon of virtue, was nevertheless able to argue intelligently and convincingly with Angelo. So, while Davenant cannot be credited with being an expert adaptor of Shakespeare, one must at least acknowledge his skill at ascertaining and following audience preferences.

In addition to the many plot changes wrought by Davenant, there are several important changes in Shakespeare's characters made by him as well, the most obvious of which is the change in Angelo. In Shakespeare's play Angelo has deserted his fiancée because her dowry was lost at sea, and when the action of the play takes place, he sets himself up as judge of Claudio for lechery while he is attempting the same crime himself. There is no mistaking his intentions in Measure for Measure; Angelo is a hypocrite, a lecher, and a villain, and Isabella's and the Duke's magnanimity in forgiving his crimes at the end of the play is to be marveled at. But Davenant, perhaps in order to reconcile Angelo's acquittal in the final act, chooses to have him merely

pretend to be the villain in order to test Isabella's virtue and her suitability as a wife. One wonders, nevertheless, how Angelo can take the feelings of the other characters so lightly and manipulate them for his own ends. In this Davenant's Angelo resembles Shakespeare's Duke, who similarly disregards the feelings of Isabella and Julietta by making them believe Claudio to be dead.

Isabella is another character whom Davenant has changed considerably from the Shakespeare original. Although she is blindly virtuous in both versions, she is more of a moralist in The Law Against Lovers. In Act IV she upbraids Julietta for her indiscretion with Claudio, even though she is aware of the torture the girl is going through knowing that her lover must die because she is pregnant. Another twist in Isabella's character supplied by Davenant is Isabella's unprotesting acquiescence to the Duke's plan to marry her to Angelo, whose offer of marriage she has already refused.

The other major character to undergo a change in Davenant's adaptation is the Duke. He is still rather underhanded in his scheme to spy on the people of his city by disguising himself as a friar, but he is much less sadistic than Shakespeare's Duke. As previously noted, Davenant's Angelo takes on the manipulating qualities of Shakespeare's Duke, while the Duke in Davenant's play is much more humane. Instead of deceiving everyone about Claudio's death until the last scene of the play, he tricks only Angelo into believing Claudio to be executed, and

he does so only for a very short time. Thus, none of the characters suffers the long agony of thinking his brother, lover, or friend dead, as in Measure for Measure. Also unlike the Duke in Shakespeare's play, Davenant's Duke abdicates his position in favor of Angelo so that he himself can retire to a monastery. He pleads age and weariness, so one must assume him to be a much older man than in Shakespeare's version. That he is so willing to give up his rule to a man who knowingly deceived his subjects to gain his own ends is somewhat of a mystery, but Davenant's characters are rather one-sided and basically trusting, so the reader must believe that the Duke thinks Angelo to be truly repentant. After all, he will have the virtuous Isabella to temper his nature.

Davenant has changed Claudio and Julietta to a certain extent, too. As noted in the plot summary, Davenant's Claudio is quick to repent of esteeming his own life above his sister's honor, while Shakespeare's Claudio never does repent. Davenant greatly expands Julietta's part from her role in Shakespeare, mainly to fill in the gaps created by his combination of the two plays. She partially assumes Mariana's role in the earlier play when Isabella suggests she surrender to Angelo in order to save Claudio, and their conversation in this episode is Davenant's fabrication. Julietta also joins in Isabella's moralizing in Act IV, while in Shakespeare she only repented having gotten Claudio in trouble, not having been his lover. Finally, Davenant expands Julietta's part to

make her offer to sacrifice her life and liberty in order to aid Claudio to escape, something not even hinted at in Measure for Measure.

Beatrice and Benedick go through no major character changes from their roles in Much Ado About Nothing, but there is one thing puzzling in their actions. It is extremely difficult for the reader to reconcile their altruistic feelings for the plight of Julietta and Claudio with their apparent lack of concern for the urgency of the situation. They constantly delay action and engage in witty banter totally irrelevant to the action of the play. One wonders, in fact, whether they are not more caught up in the cause of saving lovers from persecution by the state and in the exciting prospect of rebellion than they are concerned for the people involved. In this respect they embody the impetuosity of young people at any time in history.

It is to Davenant's credit that he retained most of the humor--what little there was--from Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, and even added to it by the inclusion of the Beatrice-Benedick scenes. One of Shakespeare's dark comedies, Measure for Measure is almost devoid of any real humor, save in the scenes which include Lucio, Mistress Overdone, Pompey, Froth, Elbow, and Abhorson. Although Davenant transferred only Lucio, Pompey, and Abhorson from Shakespeare's play, he added several other somewhat comic characters, including, of course, Beatrice and Benedick, as well as the jailer. It was necessary for Davenant to add to the humor and to lessen the morbidity of the plot--

through the change in Angelo's character and in the Duke's as well as through comic lines and characters and through the operatic elements of the play--in order to please his audiences. They demanded either straight tragedy or straight comedy (the only exception being heroic drama) and probably would not have tolerated Measure for Measure in its original form, because it was too much of a mixture of the two dramatic extremes. As it was, the play was not very popular: "Downes was forced to relegate it to his list of merely minor and incidental plays,"[4] although Pepys in his Diary entry for February 18, 1662, endorsed it as "a good play and well performed."

Why The Law Against Lovers was not popular is a matter for conjecture, but one might guess that the reasons lie in Davenant's attempt to cram too much action and too many characters into one play. Perhaps the anonymous rhyming critic of the time said it best:

> Then came the Knight agen with his Lawe
> Against Lovers the worst that ever you sawe
> In dressing of which he playnely did shew it
> Hee was a far better Cooke then a Poet
> And only he the Art of it had
> Of two good Playes to make one bad.[5]

NOTES

[1] Arthur Hobart Nethercot, Sir William D'Avenant (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 386.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 387.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Hotson, p. 247.

CHAPTER III

GILDON'S BEAUTY THE BEST ADVOCATE

Measure for Measure: or, Beauty the Best Advocate, is a late seventeenth century revision of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure. Published anonymously in 1700, the play was written by Charles Gildon and acted at Lincoln's-Inn-Fields during the 1699-1700 season. Beauty the Best Advocate was admittedly "very much Alter'd," and indeed it is, as this chapter will show. But the revisions and additions to the original do not mold the play into a typical risqué Restoration comedy, as might be expected; rather they make the play more moral and less bawdy than Shakespeare's. One might speculate that these changes indicate that Gildon was influenced by Jeremy Collier's A Short View, or at least that Collier would have applauded them. I will show that Gildon's work, rather than being a serious attempt to moralize and upgrade Shakespeare, is actually a satire pointing up the ridiculous consequences of such an attempt. As in the previous chapter, I will first note differences between the two plays with regard to mechanics and plot by act and scene, and then discuss Gildon's changes in the characters' motivations and actions.

The first structural departures from Shakespeare's Measure for Measure in Gildon's Beauty the Best Advocate are the additions of an "Epistle Dedicatory" and a "Prologue." The prologue, spoken by Betterton, in the part of Angelo, indicates that in the season of 1699-1700 Lincoln's-Inn-Fields had been forsaken for other playhouses:

> To please this Winter, we all Meanes have us'd;
> Old Playes have been Reviv'd, and New Produc'd.
> But you, it seems, by Us, wou'd not be Serv'd;
> And others Thrive, while we were almost Starv'd.
> Our House you daily shun'd, Yet Theirs you Cram'd,
> And Flocked to see the very Plays you Damn'd.

The audiences, while paying lip-service to a preference for the witty Restoration comedies, were actually showing a marked preference for the new sentimental comedies being produced at the other playhouses. The prologue, a scathing attack on the taste of the contemporary audience, goes on to indicate that the reason the play has been altered is to make it more acceptable to the sensibilities of the public. Music and dances were inserted without regard to the sense of the play because the audience demanded these things.

Like Davenant, Gildon changed the setting of the play from Vienna to Turin for no apparent reason. Other structural and plot changes will become evident in the act-by-act comparison between Shakespeare's and Gildon's versions of Measure for Measure.

Act I

Shakespeare's scene in which the Duke takes his leave of Angelo and Escalus is omitted; the first part of Gildon's first act consists of a discussion between Balthazar, a holdover from Davenant's version, and Lucio, which provides the audience with needed information about the Duke's departure. In the second part of the act Angelo and Escalus discuss the law and its application, Angelo insisting on strict enforcement of all laws, and Escalus arguing for the release and acquittal of Claudio. Angelo seems to be an honest, moral man, interested only in seeing justice done, and he says of Claudio:

> 'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
> Another thing to fall: 'tis no Excuse
> For his transgression, that I have my Failings;
> Yet, when I fail so, so let me be Sentenc'd.
> (Beauty I. i. p. 3.)

Next Isabella enters to plead for her brother's life. She makes the point that Claudio and Julietta are actually married, but Angelo still refuses to relent. In this scene appears the speech of Isabella which was discussed in Chapter II. Gildon, rather than follow Shakespeare's version or produce an alteration of his own, transferred Davenant's version of the speech in its entirety to his own work, making only a few slight word changes. That Gildon used Davenant's version of the speech indicates that he found Davenant's play--or at least his unfortunate ability to alter a Shakespeare passage beyond recognition--the perfect illustration of his point that wanton alteration of Shakespeare

results in inferior, insipid drama. The act ends with Angelo tempted to reconsider, not by Isabella's arguments but by her beauty. He calls for musical diversion to quiet his aroused desire. This entr'acte entertainment, somewhat skillfully incorporated into the play by making it part of the court entertainments, is a representation of The Loves of Dido and Æneas, by Purcell, to be presented in four acts, one near the end of each act of the play. Finally, after watching the opera, Angelo reveals that the music has not soothed him and that he wishes to possess Isabella, even though her presence reminds him of his yet unrevealed crime.

Act II

The first scene of Act II opens with Angelo deploring the fact that he can think of nothing but Isabella. She then enters, having returned to continue her suit in her brother's behalf. Angelo informs her, as in the other versions of the story, that she must submit to his amorous advances in order to save Claudio. When she refuses, Angelo suggests that she meet him at ten o'clock at the opera if she changes her mind.

Scene 2 consists mainly of the second act of Dido and Æneas, after which Angelo reveals his plan to convince Isabella he is freeing Claudio so that she will give herself to him. Then in the third scene, which takes place in the prison, we finally see the Duke, dressed as

a friar, who explains his reason for leaving Turin under the rule of Angelo. The Duke is accompanied by a genuine friar, Thomas, and it is he, not the Duke as in Shakespeare, who devises the plan to save Isabella from Angelo's lechery by substituting Mariana, his lawful wife, for her. In addition, it is Friar Thomas who hears Mariana's confession and thus learns about her marriage to Angelo and his desertion of her, whereas in Shakespeare it was the Duke.

After the expository dialogue between Friar Thomas and the Duke, the Provost enters and the two ask permission to see the condemned prisoners. They talk to Claudio, who admits only to the sin of avarice --he married Julietta for her money--and protests that lechery cannot be his crime because they were legally married by Father Pierre, who has since returned to his monastery in France. Angelo, who knows that Claudio has written to Father Pierre to verify the marriage, will not wait for the answer because he has been bribed by Pedro, his right-hand man, who was betrothed to Julietta in her father's will. Claudio insists that the only reason that their marriage was kept a secret at all was to avoid legal action by Pedro and possible forfeiture of her dowry. Most of this episode is the product not of Shakespeare but of Gildon. In Shakespeare, as in Davenant, Claudio and Julietta were merely contracted to each other illegally, not married. Nor did Shakespeare state that Claudio had married her only for her dowry, although he strongly suggested that the dowry was a major factor in

their marriage, since they kept their betrothal a secret so as not to jeopardize her inheritance. Gildon also manufactured Pedro, Julietta's guardian and intended husband according to her father's will; Shakespeare mentioned only the possibility of relatives who might protest the marriage. Gildon took further liberties with the plot by making Pedro Angelo's assistant, and by making Angelo refuse to await confirmation of the marriage by Father Pierre. Still another departure from Shakespeare's story is the fact that Gildon makes confinement of Julietta in a nunnery and denial of the privilege of seeing Claudio again one of the conditions of the same law under which Claudio must die. Pedro, we are told, is eager for her to be sent away at once so that he can obtain control of her wealth.

Finally, near the close of Act II, the Duke talks with Julietta, who confirms Claudio's assertion that they were actually married by a priest. The Duke also learns that Julietta loves Claudio and wishes to die with him.

Act III

Scene 1, still set in the prison, finds the disguised Duke attempting to prepare Claudio for his execution when Isabella enters and informs her brother of Angelo's infamous demand. Gildon's Claudio reacts as Davenant's did: he cannot understand Isabella's refusal to give up her virtue to save his life. But he soon repents, attributing his reaction

to his deep concern for Julietta, whose care he entrusts to his sister. As in Davenant's version, he gives Isabella a ring for Julietta as a symbol of their love. The Duke and Friar Thomas then enter and propose the switch of Mariana for Isabella at the meeting with Angelo, to which she readily agrees once she ascertains that Angelo and Mariana are legally married. The scene ends with the Duke preparing to return to Turin without his disguise.

In the next scene Angelo has received the Duke's letter announcing his return, and he seems distracted at the news. Escalus suggests they view the third entertainment, to which Angelo agrees, after glancing around quickly to see if Isabella has arrived to submit to his demands. After the entertainment Isabella approaches and the two leave the stage together.

Act IV

Scene 1 of Act IV takes place in Angelo's apartment, where Isabella seems still reluctant to accept Angelo's proposition until he offers her a cabinet of jewels, which she accepts (in behalf of Mariana she says in an aside), after which she quickly agrees to meet Angelo in two hours in the Royal Grotto. As she departs, Angelo gloats over his conquest.

Scene 2 finds Mariana in her garden, not with a boy, as in Measure for Measure, but with her maid, who sings--surprisingly--

Shakespeare's song. The Duke, Friar Thomas, and Isabella enter and acquaint Mariana with the plan to reunite her with Angelo and save Claudio's life. Isabella gives her the jewels, and after accepting them, Mariana departs in great haste to keep the rendezvous.

Scene 3 takes place in the prison, where there is no pardon for Claudio, despite Angelo's promise. As in Shakespeare's version the order comes demanding his head. There follows a tear-jerking scene in which the two lovers part. While this is going on, the Duke, Friar Thomas, and the Provost are plotting to save Claudio, but instead of learning the entire plan to switch first Barnardine's and then another convict's head for Claudio's, as in the Shakespeare version, the audience hears only snatches of the conversation, and thus must piece together the ensuing plans. When Isabella arrives, the disguised Duke tells her that her brother has been executed and persuades her to appear before the Duke to present charges against Angelo.

Act V

This act is set in the Great Hall of the palace, where the people are to come to claim redress against any injustice done them in the Duke's absence. The action and speeches, although somewhat shortened, follow Shakespeare fairly closely. As in Shakespeare Angelo is revealed as a lecher and a hypocrite, Mariana is reunited with him, Claudio is brought out still alive, and the Duke and Isabella

appear to be going to marry. The final act of the operatic entertainment is presented, after which the Duke vows never to leave Turin again and always to uphold justice and enforce only fair laws.

If the action described in the play seems choppy, with many gaps in the plot which are never quite closed, it is because the plot of Gildon's play is poorly tied together. In order better to point out the folly of wantonly changing a Shakespeare play, he has presented the audience with a story which would be difficult to follow had they not read or seen Shakespeare's play beforehand. Since it is probable that they had not seen Measure for Measure in its original form, the audience should have recognized the incoherence of the plot and hopefully would have realized Gildon's reason for making it incoherent. But while Gildon was satirizing adaptations of Shakespeare, he did not find the Bard's writings flawless and entirely without need of revising and correcting. Gildon was a neo-classicist, and he considered Shakespeare guilty of breaches of the classical rules of drama as he and other Restoration and eighteenth century men of letters saw them, including the unnatural juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy.[1] He did not attribute this transgression against classical rules to any lack of ability on Shakespeare's part, but blamed most of his faults on the "ignorance of the Age he liv'd in."[2] What Gildon was protesting was many authors' revising and adapting Shakespeare's plays for reasons other than to make them conform to classical rules.

Still demonstrating the consequences of refining Shakespeare out of all recognition, Gildon left out all of the Bard's risqué characters, most notably Mistress Overdone and her servant Pompey, clown of Shakespeare's comedy. Gildon's reason for omitting the bawd and her pimp was undoubtedly that they were too lewd to conform to the new morality which had been advocated the previous year by Collier. In addition he deleted other characters including Elbow, Froth, and Abhorson. Although these are by no means major characters, they provide almost the only comic relief in an otherwise extremely sadistic play, barely recognizable as a comedy at all. To complete his deletion of all humor from the play, Gildon cut all of Lucio's witty, slanderous conversations with the Duke, reducing him to a minor character who appears only in the first act. Having left out all of Shakespeare's comic characters and their speeches, one might justifiably wonder how Gildon intends to relieve the morbidity of the plot. He does so (or tries to do so) by the interpolation of operatic interludes, rather than through any conscious attempt at wit; but then Oldmixon, author of the prologue, informs us that since the audience had on previous occasions shunned the wit of the Lincoln's-Inn-Fields' players, they would henceforward give them what they wanted: music and dance.

Of the Shakespearean characters which Gildon retained, many underwent serious changes in their motivations and their actions. Probably the most altered character is Angelo, who, while the villain in

both versions, is not without some redeeming qualities in Shakespeare's, but is totally reprehensible in Gildon's. A seemingly minor shift in legal terminology has a major effect on the characterization of Angelo and on the interpretation of the whole play as well. Shakespeare made it clear that neither Claudio and Julietta, nor Angelo and Mariana were married, but only contracted to each other--the former illegally, the latter legally. Gildon, however, in order to assuage the new-found sensibilities of the late-Restoration-early-eighteenth-century audience, found it necessary to make both of these couples legally married, as he notifies us in the list of characters. This change leads to many inconsistencies in the characterization of Angelo and in the plot of the play as well. First, if Claudio and Julietta are married, then the law under which Claudio is to be executed does not apply. Second, if Angelo and Mariana are married and not merely betrothed as in Shakespeare's play, then Angelo is a monster for not owning her his wife. Both of these problems serve to make Angelo an utterly reprehensible character unworthy of his pardon at the end of the play and definitely unworthy of having the pure Isabella intercede to save his life. Throughout Beauty the Best Advocate it is clear that Angelo is acting, not from a sincere desire to dispense justice fairly according to the law, but from a dishonorable desire for power and political prestige. Why a man as base as the Angelo of Gildon's version is saved in the end is not sufficiently justified.

Isabella, whose character development figures closely with that of Angelo, is greatly changed by Gildon, although not to the extent that Angelo is. In both versions she is a somewhat shallow, sickeningly virtuous creature who values her own virginity over her brother's life. But in Gildon's version she is even more shallow and single-faceted because of his cutting and rephrasing of her speeches. Gildon has made his Isabella slightly more moral than Shakespeare's--in the eyes of the late-Restoration audience--by having her ascertain that Mariana and Angelo are actually married before she consents to setting up their clandestine meeting. Angelo's and Mariana's being married is thus a much more acceptable situation in terms of Isabella's role in getting them together. She can easily justify serving almost as a bawd between the two since their intercourse is legal under the law and in the sight of God. One twist that Gildon adds, for no apparent reason, does degrade Isabella's character considerably, however. When she goes to Angelo to set up their later illicit rendezvous in Scene 4, only after he offers her a cabinet full of jewels does she pretend to give in to his demands. She says in an aside, "These I will take as Mariana's due,/And as a proof he cannot sure deny." (Beauty IV.i.p.30.) But it is clear that she is offering herself--or rather Mariana--in exchange for the jewels. In the dialogue between Isabella and Angelo concerning the jewels, it is only as an afterthought that she says, "But my Brother, shall he too live?" Thus Angelo can debauch her with little remorse, since her

behavior in accepting the jewels resembles that of a prostitute. When she leaves he exclaims:

> O! Danae! Danae! comprehensive Image
> Of all thy sex, all spread their laps for Gold,
> Yes the whole Venal Sex is bought and sold.
> And she that with severest Virtue flies,
> Youth, Form, and Merit obstinately denies,
> Will yield to worthless Age, if Age will give her Price.
> (Beauty IV. i. p. 30.)

The two plays differ in yet another aspect concerning the Isabella-Angelo intrigue. In Gildon, Angelo plots to debauch Isabella and then cast her aside and ignore his promise to save her brother:

> Is here the storm must furnish Blest Occasion;
> And when, by Dido, I've Possess'd thy Charms,
> I then will throw thee from my glutted Arms,
> And think no more on all thy soothing Harms.
> (Beauty II. ii. p. 16.)

In Shakespeare, however, while Angelo intends to deflower Isabella, he does not make known to the audience his intention not to save Claudio. Gildon has Angelo justify going back on his promise, saying that if Claudio were freed and knew what Angelo did to his sister, he would seek revenge and expose Angelo. One finds no such attempt at justification in Shakespeare.

Still another discrepancy between the two plays concerns Julietta and Claudio. Under the law in Shakespeare's play only Claudio is punished for his moral transgression. Gildon, on the other hand, expands the law to include a clause stating that the woman involved in such an illicit affair must be shut up in a nunnery for the rest of her life. The

fact that her guardian and Angelo plot to obtain her fortune after her incarceration serves to make Julietta and Claudio all the more wronged, and Angelo even more base than ever. But his evil deeds do not stop here; he decrees that Julietta shall be forbidden even to see Claudio after his arrest. This incident is another invention of Gildon, apparently intended to add to Angelo's already long list of arbitrary and unjust deeds.

The Duke is an enigmatic character in Gildon's play as well as in Shakespeare's. Although each author takes pains to inform the audience of the Duke's reason for leaving Vienna (or Turin), neither justifies or even tries to explain his apparent lack of leadership qualities and his extremely sadistic manipulation of the other characters in the play. In both versions the Duke appears to be a weak man, incapable of enforcing the laws of his city; he can manipulate people only from behind the safety of a disguise. Another problem connected with both Shakespeare's and Gildon's inconsistent portrayal of the Duke is Isabella's reaction to finding her brother alive after she had supposed him to be dead. Instead of hating the Duke for so mercilessly deceiving her and Julietta, she appears to be going to marry him. One can speculate on the countless cruel tricks he will play on her after their marriage.

The comparison between the two plays reveals Gildon's wanton and almost always--at first glance--unjustified alteration of Shakespeare's

play. He combines scenes and speeches, throws out much and replaces what he has discarded with lines and situations which are often trite and never worthy of a Shakespeare play. But the epilogue, written and delivered by Verbruggen, says as much. It is spoken by Shakespeare's Ghost, who denounces Gildon's and other adaptors' butcherings of his plays. He speaks in favor of the old Restoration dramas rather than the new sentimental ones, and the reader realizes what he has suspected since the prologue: Gildon has revised Measure for Measure in order to satirize the new moral plays. Shakespeare's Ghost says:

> Let me no more endure such Mighty Wrongs,
> By Scribbler's Folly, or by Actors Lungs,
> So, late may Betterton forsake the Stage,
> And long may Barry live to Charm the Age.
> May a New Otway Rise, and Learn to Move
> The Men with Terror, and the Fair with Love!
> Again, may Congreve, try the Commic Strain;
> And Wycherly Review his Ancient Vein:
> Else may your Pleasure prove your greatest Curse;
> And those who now Write dully, still Write worse.

Gildon has given the audiences what they demanded in the hope that they will realize that sentimentality can only lead to triteness and to the death of true wit. But he and other protestors of the age, among them Vanbrugh and Congreve, were not successful in their attempts, for sentimentality, with all its triviality and its tragi-comic elements, was to hold the stage far into the eighteenth century and beyond.

NOTES

[1] Charles Gildon, "Preface," in Works of William Shakespeare, ed., Nicholas Rowe (London: E. Curll, 1710), VII, ix-x.

[2] Ibid., p. iv.

CHAPTER IV

KEMBLE'S MEASURE FOR MEASURE

John Philip Kemble's adaptation of Measure for Measure, presented on stage in December of 1794 and published in 1803,[1] is not as different from Shakespeare's version as are Davenant's and Gildon's. In fact, theirs must be called alterations, because they are so drastically changed from the original, while Kemble's is merely adapted to facilitate its presentation on the stage. For this reason, a scene-by-scene comparison between it and Shakespeare's version as in the two previous chapters would be tedious and almost fruitless. Kemble cut a speech here and a line there and rearranged the order of Shakespeare's scenes, but beyond that he changed the plot of the play not at all. By omitting key lines, however, he was able to change subtly one of Shakespeare's characters, Lucio.

In Scene 2 of Act I, Lucio's lines are cut considerably, probably because they contain references to venereal disease, which had evidently become an unmentionable subject immediately after Elizabethan times, since all references to it are excluded from each of the three adaptations here studied. Shakespeare's Lucio was often given to lewd comments, and Kemble omitted most of them in order to suit

the taste of his audience. Although these bawdy speeches are interspersed throughout the play, the greatest concentration of them is found in Act III, Scene 2. Here Lucio and the Duke discuss the recent events surrounding the renewed enforcement of the old law against fornication and the resulting imprisonment of Claudio. As a result of Kemble's omission of objectionable material from Lucio's speeches, this scene is much shorter in the Kemble version than in Shakespeare.

Beginning in the second scene of the third act a discrepancy between Shakespeare's Lucio and Kemble's becomes noticeable. In his speech, lines 154-156, Lucio shows concern for Claudio's predicament. But, in the corresponding passage in Kemble's version, Lucio shows no such interest:

> I'll be hang'd first. Thou art deceived in me, friar.
> But no more of this. Canst thou tell if Claudio die to-morrow
> or no?
> (Measure)

> I'll be hang'd first. Farewell, good friar; I pr'y-
> thee, pray for me. The duke, I say to thee again,
> would eat mutton on Fridays: and I say to thee, he
> would mouth with a beggar, though she smelt of brown
> bread and garlick; say that I said so. Farewell.
> (Kemble.III. ii. p. 36.)

Then again, in Act IV, Scene 1, which corresponds with Act IV, Scene 3 in the original version, Kemble cuts out lines which indicate Lucio's

sympathy for Claudio's plight:

> O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see thine eyes so red! Thou must be patient. I am fain to dine and sup with water and bran; I dare not for my head fill my belly; one fruitful meal would set me to't. But they say the Duke will be here tomorrow. By my troth, Isabel, I lov'd thy brother. If the old fantastical Duke of dark corners had been at home, he had lived.
> (Measure IV, iii, 146-153.)

> Oh, pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see thy eyes so red: if the old fantastical duke of dark corners had been at home, he had liv'd.
> (Kemble IV, i, p. 46.)

Kemble has excluded Lucio's profession of love for Claudio and has thus left him a less sympathetic character than he is in Shakespeare's version. Just why Kemble chose to omit the lines which showed Lucio to possess compassion is not clear.

In addition to removing all of Lucio's bawdy lines, Kemble omitted the more objectionable speeches of Mistress Overdone and Pompey, an act which--at least in one instance--causes the lines of other characters to be incomprehensible. For example, in Act IV, Scene 1, the Provost introduces Pompey to Abhorson as his new assistant. Abhorson's retort, "Fie upon him, he will discredit our mistery," has no meaning, since Kemble left out the four preceding lines, which reveal Pompey's former occupation:

> Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you to-morrow in your execution. If you think it meet, compound with him by year, and let him abide here with you. If not, use

him for the present and dismiss him. He cannot plead
his estimation with you; he hath been a bawd.
(Measure IV. ii. 19-23.)

A final change in Measure for Measure made by Kemble occurs at the play's end. While in both versions the Duke proposes marriage to Isabella, Kemble has replaced Shakespeare's lines with those of his own composition:

Dear Isabel,
I have a motion much imports your good,
Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline
What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.
So bring us to our palace, where we'll show
What's yet behind that's meet you all should know.
(Measure V. i. 529-534.)

For thee sweet saint, for a brother sav'd,
From that most holy shrine thou wert devote to,
Thou deign'st to spare some portion of thy love,
Thy Duke, thy friar, tempts thee from thy vow,
In its right orb let thy true spirit shine,
Blessing both prince, and people:--thus we'll reign,
Rich in possession of their hearts, and, warn'd
By the abuse of delegated trust,
Engrave this royal maxim of the mind,
To rule ourselves, before we rule mankind.
(Kemble V. i. pp. 61-62.)

As was explained in the opening chapter, Kemble's adaptation of Measure for Measure was produced following the revival of interest in Shakespeare's plays in their original form. Since the audience expected to see a Shakespearean play--not an unrecognizable alteration of it--Kemble was obliged to give the play to them in as near the original form as possible. Kemble's biographers have said that his changes in

the play were made in order to make Measure for Measure more feasible to produce.[2] Certainly the omission of objectionable language and references to objectionable subjects was necessary so that the play could be publicly presented in the late eighteenth century. It is also understandable that Kemble would want to compose his own closing lines, rather than use Shakespeare's, since he himself was playing the part of the Duke. What is not clear is the reasoning behind Kemble's alteration of Lucio's character from that of a clownish courtier capable of deep emotions to a foolish knave with concern for little save himself. All in all, however, Kemble has produced an adaptation of Measure for Measure which is true to Shakespeare in every major respect, something which cannot be said for either Davenant or Gildon.

In comparing Davenant's The Law Against Lovers, Gildon's Beauty the Best Advocate, and Kemble's Measure for Measure with the original play of Shakespeare, several things have become evident. First, it is clear that each of the three adaptors interpreted differently his role as an improver of Shakespeare. Davenant obviously felt no qualms at rearranging incidents, adding or subtracting elements, and combining two Shakespearean plays without giving credit to the original author. Gildon took many of the same liberties, but with a different purpose: he was satirizing the practice of wanton alteration of Shakespeare, not seriously conforming to that practice. His only serious concern in

changing Shakespeare's plays was to make them conform to the classical rules of drama. Kemble, who represents the opposite extreme from Davenant, effected only those changes which he felt were necessary to make feasible the play's presentation on the late eighteenth century stage.

Second, it is apparent that each of the three adaptors was greatly influenced by audience preferences and current theatrical trends. Davenant inserted operatic elements, reformed the language and made the plot more moralistic, and combined two plays in order to utilize what he considered to be the best from each, all in order to appease his audiences' demands for such things. Similarly, Gildon refined Measure for Measure to make it conform to the tenets set forth by Collier, but with a different twist. Gildon was not serious in his attempt to please the audience and conform to the social and moral standards of the time, while Davenant was. Kemble, as a result of the earlier Shakespearean revival and the audience demands for presentations of Shakespeare's plays in their original form, produced an adaptation of Measure for Measure almost identical to the original.

Finally, one can see that in almost every case the adaptor's attempt to improve Shakespeare's plot, his language, his morals, or his characters, resulted in more ambiguity and a less perfect play than the original. Davenant tried to improve on Shakespeare's plot by adding to it the Beatrice-Benedick episodes from Much Ado About Nothing, but

the result was a more complicated, less coherent plot than Shakespeare's. Gildon purposely butchered Measure for Measure in every respect to show the fatal results of such action by serious adaptors. And Kemble, while changing very little in the play, changed the interpretation of Lucio by consciously omitting from his speeches any lines which showed him to be a sympathetic character.

These three adaptations or alterations of Measure for Measure are of little value to the modern director. It is inconceivable that any of them would be presented on stage today or in the future. But the plays are of great interest to the student of literature in that they represent various changes in attitudes about Shakespeare's plays in particular and about drama in general. In addition, reflected in Davenant's, Gildon's, and Kemble's adaptations of Measure for Measure are the theatrical, philosophical, and social trends which affected the people and the literature of the eras in which they were written and performed.

NOTES

[1] Branam, p. 186.

[2] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

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